

THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 166

Autumn 1995

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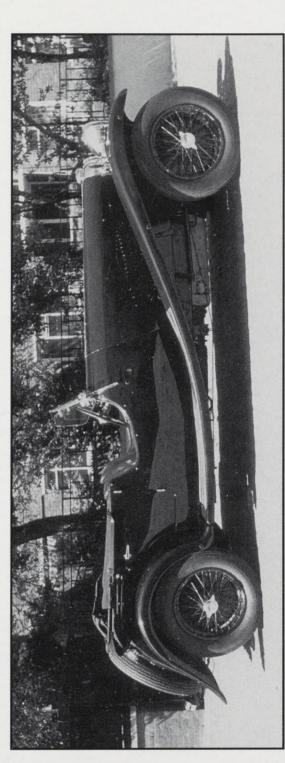
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MAGAZINE Issue No. 166 Autumn 1995

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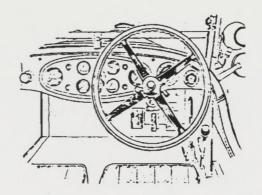
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FRONT COVER

Leonard Walby with his LG45 saloon, which he has owned since 1950.

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From the Driving Seat



THIS edition seems to be an Arnold Davey special, since almost everything within it has been written by him especially for the magazine. This is actually a collation of articles written over a fairly long time span, but held over by yours truly to allow space for topical articles. Since there has been no discernible gap between the preparation of the Summer edition and this one, it seemed appropriate to catch up with his prodigious output and clear the decks for the flood of articles I confidently expect from the rest of our membership!

At the time of writing, your Editor was frantically seeking more information on the two brief and tantalising items of news, one on Classic FM and the other in "The Guardian", that cars over 25 years old are to be exempted from vehicle excise duty - that's annual tax to you and By the time you read this, the details may be better known, but on the face of it, it seems like splendid news for all of us, unless, that is, some restrictions on the car's use are applied at the same This is apparently the case in France. Countries like Singapore place very stringent restrictions on old car use, I believe it amounts to about three weeks use per year.

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs responded very strongly to the crazy suggestion that we should be subjected to continuous licencing, but they were careful not to suggest that cars like ours should be exempted from tax in case restrictions were imposed. They pointed out that, since most insurance policies are granted on the basis of restricted mileage, a reduced tax of about 25% would mean that our tax rate per mile would roughly be the same as a modern vehicle.

It doesn't seem all that long ago that the Painter family used a pre-war car as our sole means of transport, but, thinking back, it was actually 25 years ago and I now drive some 30,000 miles plus every year, not the sort of use I would want to make of any pre-war Lagonda, but since most of the special insurance schemes for our sort of car seem to be no cheaper if the car is declared as "off the road", the thought of being able to use an old car whenever a suitable opportunity arises is very attractive. The restoration plans for my 2 litre, once viewed as probably taking me well into retirement, now go into overdrive. Has anyone got a low chassis 2 litre ignition switch they want

We hope that reversion to our normal black and white presentation for the magazine doesn't cause too many members to suffer any form of withdrawal symptoms, but full colour reproduction costs considerably more and, unless we can encourage much more advertising, it is a luxury we can ill afford on a regular basis - but if our friends at Aston Martin Lagonda would like to sponsor full colour pictures in your and my favourite magazine, we would be very happy to talk to them about the fine details......

Talking of advertising and of advertisers, it is pleasing that so many members support the Club and the magazine by placing regular adverts within our pages. I am sure that many other members provide services which would potentially benefit fellow Lagonda owners, so why not consider following the excellent example of our present advertisers and promote your goods and services through our pages?

Reflections

I AM SAVOURING the Summer "Le Mans" edition of our magazine and not reading it all at once. I have, however, looked at all the pictures and what a splendid record they present - although there must be thousands more to include all the cars. When the video comes out that will be fantastic!

What about the Vichy Rally, which in itself was quite an undertaking? Members will have noticed that I gave a lot of thought to the presentation of the title of this momentous endurance rally for 25 Lagondas over thousands of miles of foreign soil and came up with "Trip B". It's a wonder anyone joined at all.

La Chartre was our first stop with the amazing Mayoral hospitality - by now my "French" response was word perfect and Peter Whenman recognised "J'aimerai vous presentez...." as the cue to step forward with the Lagonda tankard, which always went down well. Full of Mayoral champagne and, presumably, immunity from the local plod we were priveleged to have a go on the local racetrack, which was very exciting and which used up most of the tread that Le Mans had left on our tyres.

The rest of the rally through St Pourcain (rough wine, best drunk at -5°C) and Vichy was restful or hectic, depending on the options one chose. The trip up the Puy de Dôme near Clerment Ferrand was a highlight. This is an enormous extinct volcano, so high that Voltair discovered atmospheric pressure (or lack of it) by climbing to the top with a mercury barometer! The Lagondas ascended using a modern spiral road, which required full use of all gears and auxilliary fuel pumps and at least one Storrs' LG45 exhaust valve!

Back to the UK with a bump and our AGM get-together, where everyone agreed that the enthusiasm and momentum must be maintained. Yes, we have smaller events lined up for '96, but thought is now being given to a "mega do" in 1999.

One or two ideas have been tabled, but as always we seek inspiration from one and all, so don't hesitate to shout.

I am writing this in some haste (as the Forshaws say), as today is the test day for my 16/80 saloon after its seven year rebuild - so wish me luck with the mysteries of epicyclic gearbox bands.

Post Script. Another mystery is that my LG45 engine which seized up was found to have oval cylinders - the responsibility for which was denied by the re-borer chap "They were round when they left 'ere mate". Must be stress relieving or something after the liners had been pressed in?

David Hine

Acquiring a Lagonda or, Fulfilling a Dream

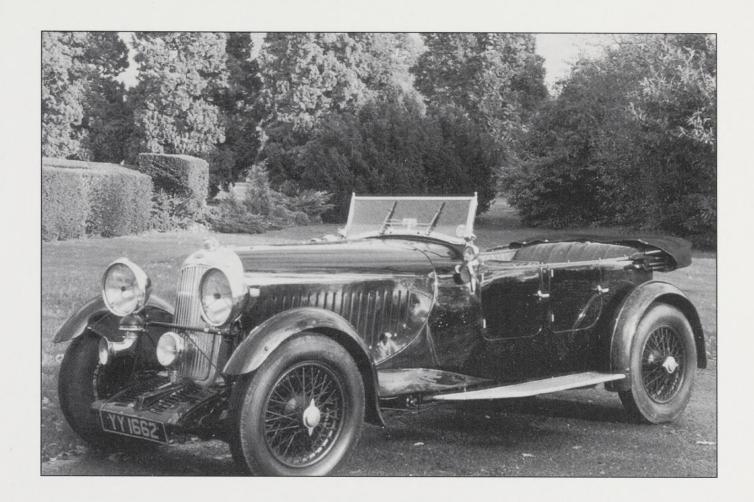
BEING mechanically minded is not easy, for one thing there are so many interesting, well-engineered machines available. Given such a wide spectrum of desirable motor cars, making a decision is never easy, for me, however, desiring a Lagonda was a simple process. Based in the mists of time, when I wore shorts and had trouble keeping my hands clean, a friend of my father owned a red label Bentley. Like most small boys I fell in love with the machine despite my Mother's remonstrations to be careful! During my sojourn at University, practical transport was required, but I chose to help a friend with his 1 1/2 litre Aston Martin and front wheel drive Alvis - I got hooked with the VSCC and quickly appreciated that a Bentley would always be beyond my means, but a Lagonda was equally appealing and, in many ways, a better option - but still beyond my financial capability.

As my posting branch decided that frequent moves were the best method of keeping me occupied, I found it difficult keep my interest in machinery. I dallied into lawnmowers, tractors, bicycles and, latterly, motor cycles, but the Lagonda bug wouldn't go away. I promised myself that my retirement or redundancy money could be used, but this was still over the horizon, so to speak. Things changed when we had a baby son and his Mother decreed that a sidecar on a 1919 Sunbeam was not a suitable pram, even at only 30 mph! I saw my chance, now we should have a Lagonda, family motoring in comfort, prices were affordable - just - and we were to be posted back to England in less than 12 months time. The plan was endorsed!

Having already joined the Club, my commitments in England were now adjusted to coincide with the AGM. Having owned a number of cars and belonged to their clubs, I knew that both the car and the club were of equal importance. No point in having a wonderful car with no spares or technical support, run by people in whom you have little in common! My trips back to England tended to coincide with cars that were for sale, frequently followed by long telephone calls to Colin Bugler and Arnold Davey. I quickly realised that no two Lagondas are alike. It's a bit like learning to ride a bike, you can have lots of advice, but you just have to grit your teeth and go for it. I read all the books and articles, made charts, estimated repair costs and in the end I could have lost my heart to all the Lagondas that I viewed.

Attending the AGM was very sucessful, not only did we see lots of cars, but we met plenty of very helpful people who were willing to advise. Here we confirmed our plan to buy and everyone I met I asked, "know of a good 2 litre for sale?" Because of the ferry timetable to Germany, our time at the AGM was cut short, but I followed it up with a number of letters to likely contacts. During the autumn there were a number of cars for sale and we eventually bought YY 1662, a 2 litre Continental. Interestingly, the car came from a dealer, rather than the private and club contacts that I had nurtured so carefully, but, based on the little knowledge I had gained, I felt confident to take the plunge.

We then had a frustrating period of some months, when we were in Germany and the car in England. I succeeded in seeing the car about once a month and I found lots to do in the evenings in fettling the car. On one such trip back to England I took the car to Colin and Valerie Bugler's. I enjoyed a very



hospitable visit and Colin's opinion of the car was reassuring. Feeling confident on the return leg, I took a longer route, only to break the 3rd/4th gear selector some 35 miles from home. I drove back very slowly, pondering on the mechanical failure, with my ego at rock bottom. My plane left early the next day and it was now 2pm.

I got the car into the garage, took out the seats and floor boards, lifted the top of the gearbox and confirmed the broken selector - more practice needed with double declutching, I mused. I then spent 20 minutes on the telephone seeking advice from other members. It became clear that the box must come out and selectors were not freely available. By 4.30 pm the box was out, in the hire car and off to Colin's. On his bench we stripped out the gearbox and by this time Colin had found that he had a spare box. We stripped his box too, but found his selector was cracked in the same place mine had broken, but decided to rebuild

my box using the cracked selector. Sustained by Valerie's food and drink, I returned to YY 1662 and by 10 pm the box was back in the car and she was running again - not bad in eight hours! I slept well that night, exhausted, but very grateful. The following morning I had a telephone call to say that another member had "found" a serviceable selector that he was happy to donate - what generosity of spirit! As it was, I had to wait until my next trip to England to pick up the "new" selector and fit it, but for me it was the epitome of the Club.

Having returned to England, we are now united with YY 1662. I understand I have spent more time in the garage than the sitting room, but that surely is an exaggeration! We have atended a number of Lagonda Club events, the highlight, so far, being the Le Mans celebration at Staines. We have continued to meet lovely people, been made to feel very welcome and the car has been fantastic. We will have attended the AGM and

plan lots of exciting things in the future. This is my way of publicly thanking so many people who have given of their time and advice so freely. Yes, the cars are important, but it's the people that make the Club so special. Clearly the Club cannot solve all our spares problems

in eight hours - dream on John Oliver! but I believe my story speaks volumes for the Club. I am very proud to be associated with the Lagonda Club - thank you to you all.

Stephen Matthews

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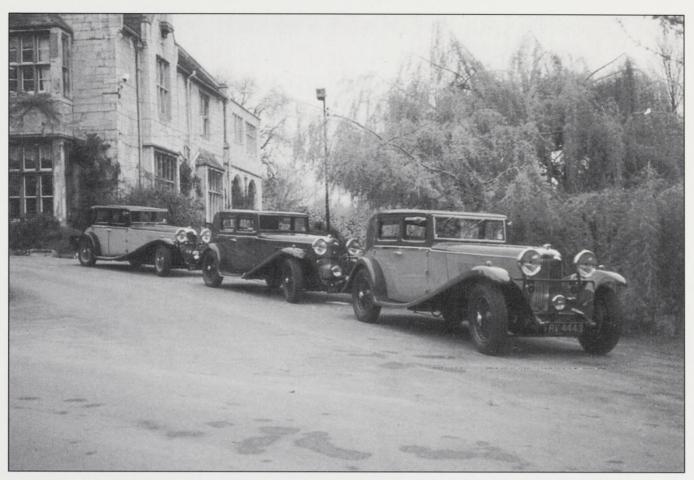
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Monk Fryston Dinner April 1995. A trio of M45 saloons, owned by Firth, Hine and Balfour.



Monk Fryston Dinner. Alistair Barker entertains Beryl Firth and Margaret Hatfield, but why does he need two drinks?

In Register

(The return of a lately neglected feature)

THE Registrar has had a busy time recently. (What's new? I hear you ask). It follows from unexpected new additions to my/the Club's archives. The first additions came from a bookseller at the Sandown Park Autojumble/book fair. He had for sale three large photos of Lagondas, all of uncertain date, but most probably prewar. One had Barker's logo in one corner and showed a very imposing limousine on a long wheelbase that I assumed was a V12. On getting it home, I scaled up the wheelbase from a tyre diameter and made it about 11ft 6in. The trouble was, Barker's only built one body on the 11ft 6in V12 and that was a sedanca and its drawings from the Barker archive didn't look anything like this car. Then the penny dropped. It wasn't a V12, but a long wheelbase LG6 (11ft 3 1/2in). Sure enough, there it was in the records, "black with a leathercloth roof", Customer: "Miss Enos" (actually Miss Eno. but close). The car still survives and Colin Lindsey owns it now.

original print of the 20 HP car shown in the top photograph on page 24 of Geoff Seaton's book. With the benefit of an original print and my watchmaker's eyeglass, I was able to detect several interesting things about this car. Yes, the picture was taken in Russia, but this is the 1911 or 1912 20HP, with a more refined body than the famous trial car and the backs of the seats do not protrude above the body sides. For no known reason the car is flying the Red Ensign! It is attached to a small staff fixed between the offside sidelamp and

the windscreen and why the car should

be displaying this nautical emblem is a

complete mystery. The tyre markings are

revolutionary Cyrillic script, which

are in

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readable and

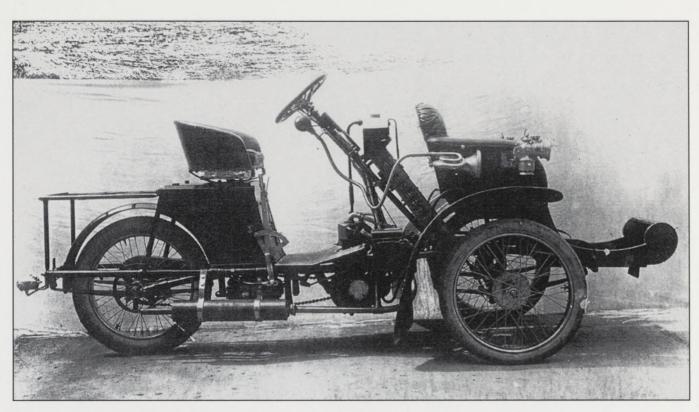
The second picture was a large

differs slightly from today's. The tyres turn out not to be the legendary Prowodnik that never wear out, but are in fact American, made by a firm called Ross and were "reinforced". The size is 810 x 90. This applies to the visible offside front tyre and the Stepney spare, but the offside rear is of a different make and is studded. You can't make out anything of the markings of this one.

If you have examined an 11.1, you will probably have remarked on its oddly flimsy spun brass radiator filler cap, which has threads rolled into it, so that the outside appears to be threaded too, rather than cut into a casting. I had always assumed that this was a Gunn/Cranmer weight saving dodge for the not very powerful 11.1 and it is rather unexpected to find the same design on the more massive 20 HP. Also unexpected is that the script "Lagonda" badge is not attached to the radiator top tank, but is pressed into the metal. Cheap and light, of course, but a devil to keep clean I should think. The Lagonda name also appears on each hub dust cover. They are giant hexagons but, again unexpectedly, the name is in block capitals and not the script badge found everywhere else. No attempt was made to translate Lagonda into the Cyrillic script.

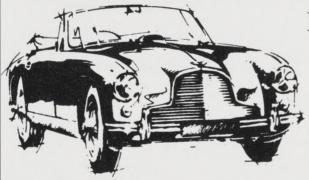
True to Lagonda's adverts at the time, no dampers are fitted. The long banner in Russian above the bonnet refers to the Russo- Baltic, which was a couple of stands away, past the apparently empty Mercedes stand. I will come back to the pre-1913 cars in a moment.

The third picture started out ordinary, but became more interesting the more you looked at it. It is a water cooled twin Tricar with wheel steering and I settled





ASTON MARTIN - LAGONDA SERVICE



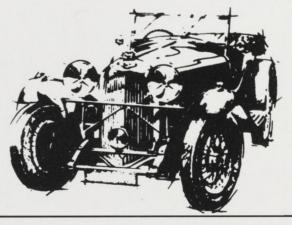
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Gudgeon Pins

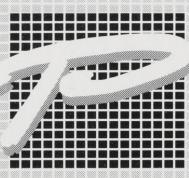
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surviving machines of this type this was. It soon emerged that it was neither. So, by implication, there either was or still is another lurking somewhere. photograph isn't dated, but the practice of getting the staff to hold up a grubby white sheet as a background probably died with the second war and I believe this picture to be from the 'thirties. There are a number of differences from both Peter Walby's Tricar and the ex-Aston Martin Lagonda one. The radiator top tank, for example, is quite a different shape and is mounted vertically, whereas the others have theirs inclined at the same angle as the steering column. It is also either taller or mounted higher up to capture more of the cooling breeze. This tricar has no magneto drive, which the AML car does have, even though it was most likely fitted after manufacture. Also its rear mudguard is of domed section, while both the other machines have flat metal sheets bent to shape. The forecarriage is mounted on C-springs (Peter's isn't). I believe the mysterious box by the driver's foot contains the trembler coil and possibly the battery too. The horn is also different, although this is not very significant. The luggage carrier is shorter than on the AML car.

In examining all my tricar pictures I suddenly noticed something that had escaped notice before, that the exhaust pipes of the air-cooled twins came out of the back of the heads, whereas the watercooled ones come out at the front. So the change to water-cooling must have meant a quite substantial redesign. The change almost certainly followed from complaints by owners of the earlier design that when you used the footbrake the hot exhaust pipe set fire to your shoe. As the front brakes, when used, took control of the steering, the Tricar driver experienced some problems stopping.

I sent Peter Walby a copy of this photo for his comments and he confirms that it isn't a picture of his machine. He also pointed out that although this one has the later internally expanding drum brakes on the front, there doesn't seem to be any operating mechanism, unless it retained the left-foot pedal that was fitted when the earlier external contracting band brakes were fitted. He was also pleased to find on this Tricar a similar on/off switch for the trembler coil, confirming that his one is original, if incomplete.

Also at Sandown park, on another stand, I got hold of a copy of "The Automobile Engineer" Yearbook for 1913, which makes fascinating period reading. The reason for mentioning it here is the table of British car chassis which it contains. The book was published in February 1913 and lists three Lagonda models, the 11 HP, the 20 HP and the 30 HP. Now Wilbur Gunn was still in the process of forming Lagonda Limited, with finance from Tollemache & Griffin, and the new company was only formally created on 3rd March 1913, so he must have been fairly confident that all was going to go according to plan to list the 11.1 as a production model for the Yearbook. In view of this, it is not surprising that the specification printed there differs in a few details from that finally used. For example, under "carburettor" they list "own", when the early 11's had an SU and there is no evidence that Lagonda ever made its own carburettors - about the only component Gunn bought in. Rolls Royce made their own, but most manufacturers wouldn't go to all that trouble when perfectly satisfactory instruments were available everywhere. The tyre size is given as 700 x 80, which differs from the 650 x 65 eventually used. Similarly, the rear axle is quoted as being a 3.5 to 1 bevel, but a 3.9 to 1 worm was fitted to production cars. Both these changes represent a considerable gearing down compared with the prototype (which I presume the Yearbook is describing), mph/1000 23.4 reducing to 19.5, a reduction of 17%. This sort of thing is not uncommon; the

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- 3. An RACMSA Official.



THE NEW KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

production car is always heavier and production engines rarely achieve the output of the lovingly made prototype. The only way to keep the performance is to gear down. We have our first knowledge of the intended compression ratio of the 11.1 from this table, but it is a trap for the unwary by quoting the volume of the compression space as 20% of the displacement volume. This does not mean 5 to 1, as you might think, but 6 to 1 when you work it out. To our eyes, some of the measurements quoted are rather odd. The valves were 33mm in diameter and had a lift of 8mm. Each piston weighed a pound. Engine lubrication is given as "trough", but Gunn improved on this for production by providing a pump, even though it wasn't a pressure system as we know it today.

Turning to the bigger cars, both had a 6 to 1 compression ratio, with 44m valves lifting 9.5mm and each piston weighed 1 lb 8oz (clearly cast iron). Both were supposed to have Lagonda's own carburettor, which is extremely doubtful, Polyrhoe is far more likely, and these were fed by gravity, which presumes a scuttle fuel tank even though no filler can be seen in the photos that exist of these models, one imagines it had been concealed under the bonnet. Cooling was by pump and engine lubrication by "T & F", which means a pump forced oil into the main bearings and everything else relied on troughs. Both models drove via a leather-lined cone clutch, but to different rear axles, the 20 having a 4 to 1 worm and the 30 a 3.5 to 1 bevel. These give typical Edwardian relaxed gearing of 23.7 and 29.3 mph/1000 rpm respectively. Gearbox internal ratios were the same for both, first being 2.71 and second 1.56. The tyre sizes differed, the 20 using 810×100 and the larger car 875 x 105, which gave it over an inch extra ground clearance. Both wheelbase and track varied between the two models, the smaller car using 10ft and 4ft 6in (practically the same as a 2 litre) and the other 11ft 8in and 4ft 7in. I presume the track figure refers to the rear axle where the larger tyre section and probably brake drum width would dictate an increase over the smaller car.

It is interesting to compare these typical Edwardians, made in Gunn's "Russian" period with contemporaries. The tables list 162 different British chassis from 55 makers. Gunn's 30 HP has the greatest ground clearance, apart from the avowedly "Colonial" models, labelled as such. He also uses one of the highest compression ratios, 4.5 to 1 being the norm. In fact, the table elsewhere in the book, giving expected compression pressures only ranges from 3.5 up to 5 to 1, so Gunn was well ahead of his time. Most other makes had cambered springs, some quite steeply, a relic of the horse driven era, but Lagonda, with Lanchester, Maudslay and Talbot, were the only ones to use springs which were designed to be flat under load, giving far more predictable handling.

Much of the book is given over to the calculation of "K". In the days before published road tests, the performance and fuel consumption of cars was a closely guarded secret and there were numerous attempts to evolve a formula that could give a reasonable estimate of performance based solely on published dimensions. Unfortunately, most of these formulae had to assume that all engines would be uniformly efficient, which was manifestly not the case and the constants that were added to bring the observed values into line with the formula usually meant that the better cars could easily outperform the calculated values. "K" was one such formula, depending solely on engine size, gear ratios and the weight of the car. It produced results that were not desperately far out, on the face of it, until you look at the figures for the 45/50 HP Rolls Royce, where the calculated fuel consumption of 12 to 14 mpg doesn't fit in with the actual 24.3 mpg recorded by the RAC under test

conditions. These sorts of anomalies, pointed out gleefully by the makers, led to the demise of the formulae eventually, but for the common run of vehicles they did enable the prospective purchaser to get at least some idea of the hill climbing abilities of the vehicle he was interested in. As a sidelight, I have no idea what the RAC testers did, but Silver Ghost owners of my acquaintance would be delighted to get 14 mpg and if they got 24, would immediately whip the head off to see if they had burnt out their pistons.

Not long after Sandown Park and its treasures, a bulky envelope arrived from Phil Erhardt, containing more treasures, some of them originating from John Rees, who did the restoration of HPL 448, the 1939 V12 works Team Car, and in the process accumulated a huge dossier on the car and associated matters. First out of the envelope was the original correspondence with the Indianapolis authorities containing details of the 1946 entry there by Robert Arbuthnot of HPL 449, the other 1939 V12. The car would have been number 57 in the 500 mile race, had it started.

The second John Rees item was even rarer. It was the only known copy of the instruction manual for the marine V12. It is in typescript with stuck-in pictures from the car manual and is dated 18th June 1943. It came, originally from Stan Ivermee in 1973, when he was living in retirement near Chelmsford and he passed it on to a Mr Chilcott, who owned a V12 and lived nearby. Stan is almost certainly the author. Much of the material is familiar if you have a V12 handbook, but there are differences and they are, some of them, very strange. For example, these wartime engines reverted to the Sanction firing order. I unconventional one dreamed up by Stuart Tresillian, who was that sort of bloke. With the Sanction II engines Lagonda went back to the more normal (and better) firing order, which gives 420 degrees between similar cylinders on each bank. Why go back to the superseded one? The navy rated the bhp at 4500 rpm engine at 120 continuous, which is down on the 155 bhp at that speed in car form. The exhaust valve clearance was opened up from 5 thou to 8, which would reduce power a little, but the engine is timed at 6 degrees BTDC instead of at TDC, which implies the opposite. The sump capacity is listed as 3 1/2 gallons compared with 3 gallons for the car, but my copy of the V12 handbook has had the extra half gallon inked in later and I suspect owners found 3 gallons left the level a bit low. The major physical change to the engine for its naval use was to take a drive for a seawater cooling pump by chain off the nose of the crankshaft. Incidentally, the photo of the marine V12 published by the company does not have this drive, confirming my suspicion that the photo was of a car engine and not what it was claimed to be. Sparking plugs were L10S instead of L10, but I cannot assess the significance of this as the L10S is not listed in my Champion catalogue. It may just be a shorter reach version. Althought the engine continued to have two oil pumps and two filters, nothing is said about a dual-pressure system, leading me to suppose that the works had already modified these engines, as they were doing to owners' cars, to link the two systems. Expected oil pressure is given as 85 lb/sq.in. at 80 degrees C, which looks a little on the high side.

The cooling system was much more elaborate than on a car. The normal water pump circulated fresh water within the engine, with the normal thermostat and a header tank, but no radiator as such. Both fresh water and oil were cooled by a seawater system which also cooled the exhaust manifold and then the silencer, making it much more effective - vital for secret work of the kind the boat was intended for. The seawater pump, driven by the external chain mentioned before, was only needed when the boat was stationary with its engine running. Once under way, a scoop forced seawater

under pressure round the system, overriding the pump. The same external chain also drove yet a third oil pump, this one circulated the oil from the sump through an oil cooler, helping to maintain the desired running temperature of 80 degrees C. There is a section on the transmission gear which is frustrating in that there are illustrations. The boat was driven by twin contra-rotating propellors that also did most of the steering, so the transmission gears would have been fairly complex, allowing the propellors to run at different speeds in either direction, plus a neutral position and also, probably, a device to prevent the engine overspeeding if one or both propellors came out of the water when at full throttle. From the adjustment instructions there were at least four bevel gear sets in two separate housings. Lubrication, more or less throughout, was by means of "Admiralty ICE oil", a delightfully high-handed approach that assumed one oil could do everything required in an internal combustion engine. Must have been magic stuff.

Lagondas built 110 of these engines, but they weren't successful and only a few were actually used, I believe about 20. The main problem was the weight of the V12, so that the boat couldn't get up on to its planing position, compounded by the complexity of the engine if it went wrong. Contrary to what I wrote in the history book, the Ford V8 engine was no more satisfactory either, as it just wasn't powerful enough and the eventual choice was a Gray V12 "Fireball", which put out over 140 bhp. By the time all the experimental work was done the need for the boats had evaporated and they were never used in anger. The surplus eighty-odd V12 engines were shunted around naval stores, were auctioned off in the early 'fifties and eventually scrapped as no-one wanted them at the

"If only" is the saddest phrase in the historian's vocabulary. By 1973 I was

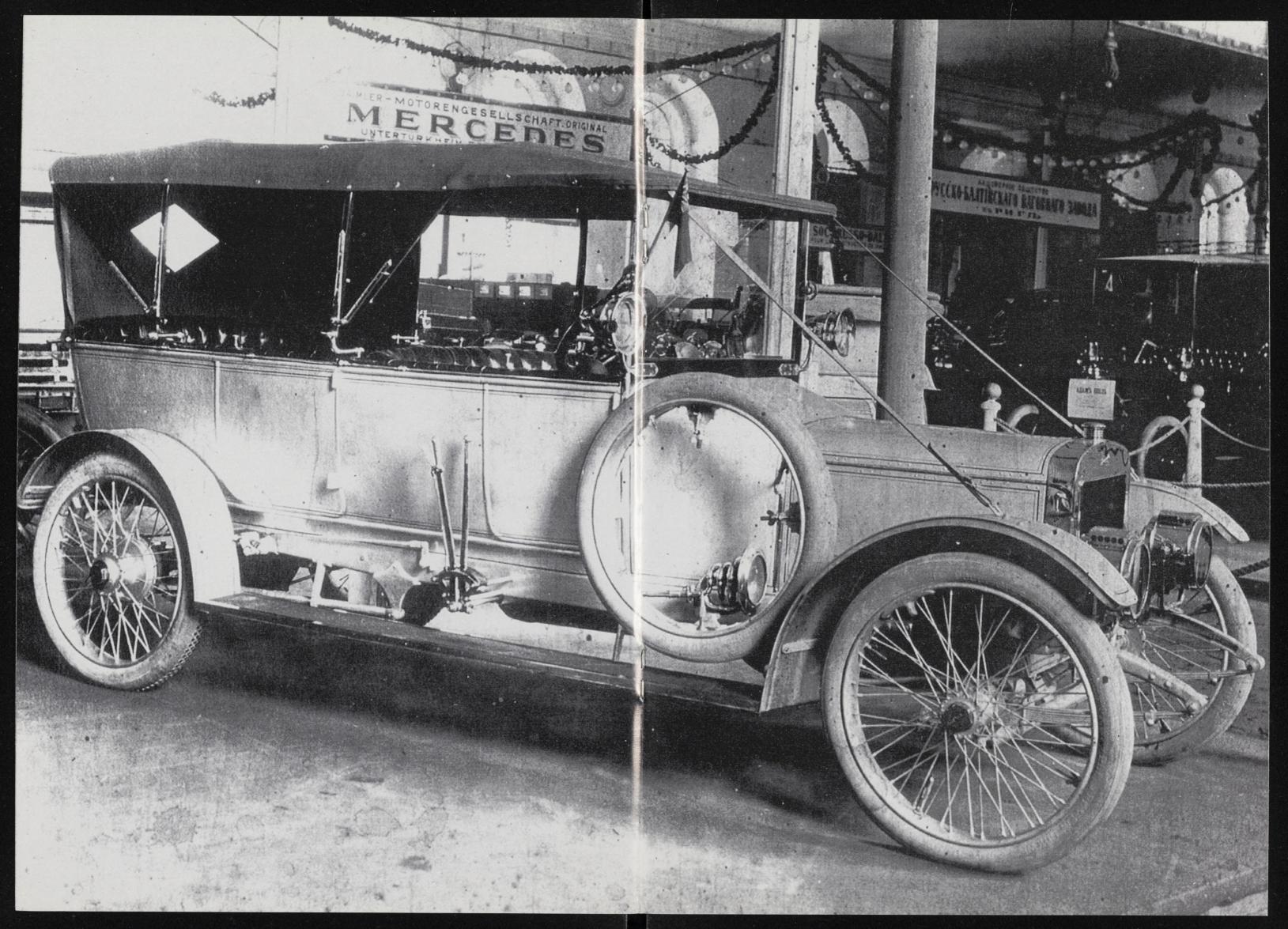
already collecting material for the Lagonda history and would have given substantial chunks of anatomy to have met Stan Ivermee, but never could find him. All the time, he was living near Chelmsford and fully possessed of his marbles, just an hour's drive away. If only.....

One other point on the marine V12 book. We are used, nowadays, for bits of Sellotape to dry up and fall off in about five years. The pictures in this 1943 book are fixed in with this tape, which was pretty rare if not unobtainable then, apart from somewhere like Lagondas, engaged in top-hush war work. With all the advances in technology that have taken place since, why is it that the 1943 pictures are still firmly in place, held by slightly brown 1943 Sellotape?

The last item in Phil's collection was a letter and diagram from Donald Bastow, giving the distributor advance curve for the 2.6, as worked out in May 1945. This was in response to Phil's request for help when retuning the 1939 team car. I must admit that I have never given the subject much thought and assumed that the curve would be something simple, like a parabola perhaps. The actual curve is a rather strange S-shape, being concave up to about 2000 rpm and convex thereafter. Donald goes on the explain that this is the optimum curve for the engine and does not correspond to any known commercial distributor, but at least you would know what you were looking for.

All these treasures came my way in May and early June this year. Then came the Le Mans send-off at Staines with dozens of old Lags in attendance, several with treasured relics. But that is another story and will make another article.

Arnold Davey



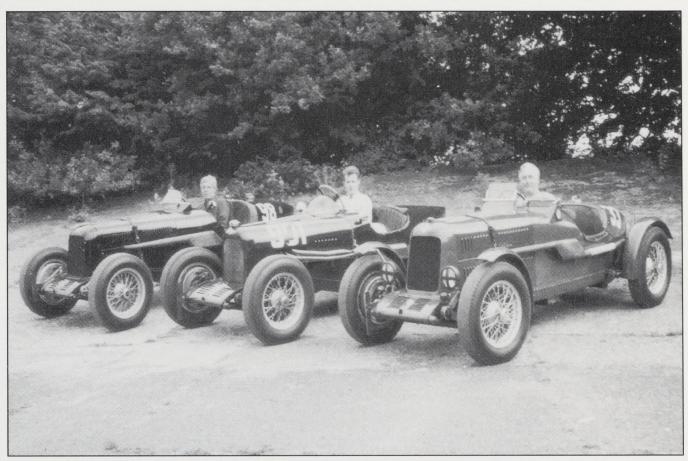
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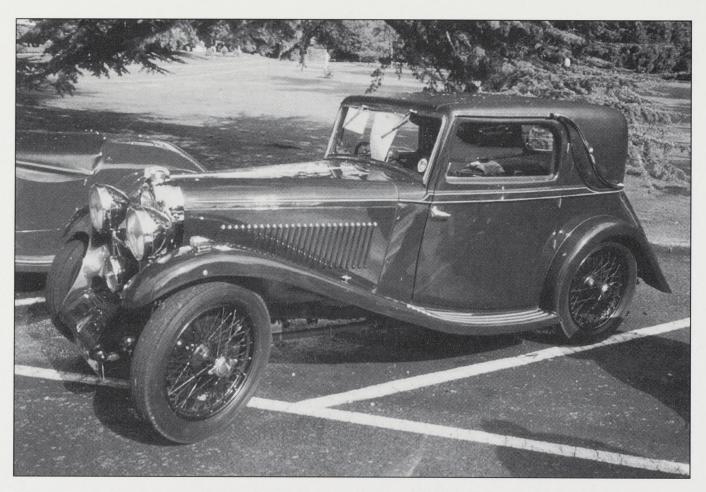
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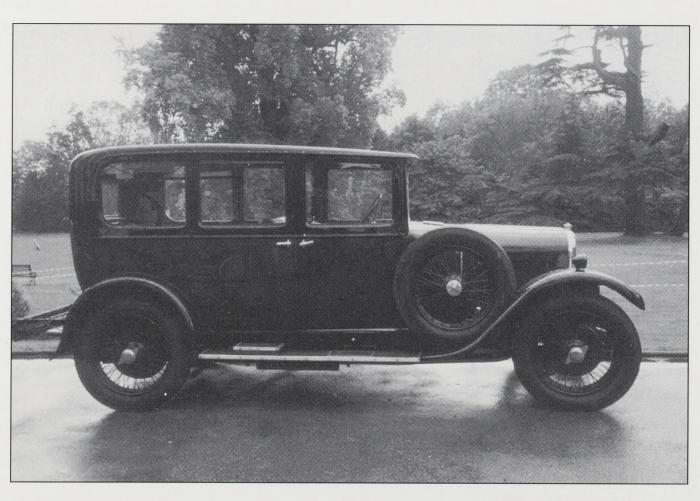
Three supercharged Rapiers at the VSCC Brooklands Sprint. L to R: Peter Whenman (1100 cc), Tim Metcalfe (1500 cc), Tim Wakeley (1100 cc).



Clive Dalton's pretty 2 litre Continental at the 1995 AGM. A full report of the event will be in the Winter Magazine.



Two more AGM pictures. Above, the class winning Rapier of Malcolm Burgess. Below, the superb 14/60 saloon of Peter Jones.







The Suffolk Dinner

Saturday 23rd March 1996, 6.45 pm for 7.15 pm at

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Lemon Sorbet



Supreme of Chicken Sandeman (cooked in Whisky & Cream) Vegetables in Season



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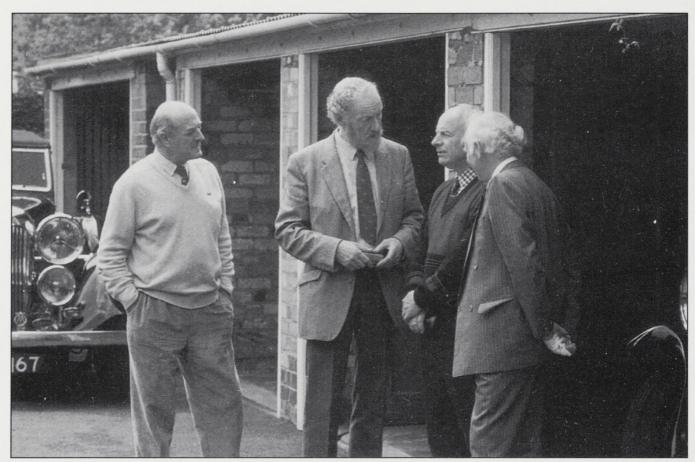


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ALSO - Sunday 24 March, vintage run to country pub for lunch



 $Frank\ Storrs,\ John\ Langridge,\ David\ Hine\ and\ Sam\ Anderson\ at\ Peter\ Walby's\ lunch\ party\ (see\ "Letters").$



 $A\ general\ view\ of\ the\ people\ and\ the\ cars\ at\ Peter\ Walby's\ lunch\ party.$

VSCC Loton Park 28th May 1995

IT'S a lovely setting and a great hill -Loton Park that is. The weather could have been better, but we escaped any serious downpours. There were just one or two drops on Sunday during the lunchtime picnics, which slightly diluted the Chateau Talbot and softened the Bath Olivers, but this made no

inroads into the bonhomie.

The weekend started on Saturday, with practice. People arrived, found their slots, got themselves organised and did their practice runs. All this takes place in a pleasantly relaxed, almost garden party, atmosphere. Ken's Maserati appeared in what can only be described as Bismark Grey (undercoat, actually, Ed). However, do not get the impression that this sank the Painter family chances, as you will see, they performed admirably, even though it is a Maserati.

After practice, we all went our various ways for Saturday evening to prepare for the official two runs for each

competitor on Sunday.

Two of the Lagonda "Heavy Metal" brigade, viz: Messrs. Hall and Barker, were booked for the night into "Jasmine Cottage". I won't tell you where it is because I don't think I could find it again. The couple who were our hosts were very pleasant and, on enquiry if there was a pub nearby where we could get something to eat and drink, replied "Yes, there is the White Horse, a couple of miles down the road and it is quite a pleasant walk. But if you are thinking of having a few, I'd take the car as it is a difficult walk back". Those were the days! Nice to know there are some places left, out "in the sticks", where you have not got police lurking around in cars looking for an easy touch.

Sunday saw Mr J.D.Crabtree opening the batting for Lagondas with a steady climb, just failing to reach his handicap time. Mr T.G. Wakeley was our other opener (in Class 2) who had to contend

with a very full and competitive class. He made two excellent climbs and was

only just "out of the money".

The Painter family featured in Class 3. Ken made two consistent climbs, but Adam spun at Triangle, flipped the car back onto the track and finished just over two seconds slower than his father. It transpired that a hydraulic brake pipe had broken, so he actually completed the second part of his run with no front brakes. All was well for the second run and he put up a blistering time to take first in class. Ken finished a lowly 5th!

The mid-order batsmen of Class 4 produced a solid performance in line with the size and weight of their machinery. No inference is intended as to the height and weight of the drivers, although it must be noted that Mr Hall's tyres looked very soft when he sat in the car. It could, of course, have been an optical illusion. Messrs. Harris and Tebbett made good runs particularly fine cover drives and late cuts. All got close to their handicaps, but

not quite close enough.

Class 7 saw a Lagonda non-runner in the form of Mr B.P. Fidler. However, Class 6, which would appear to be the family class, saw some close and exciting runs. Metcalfe T.M. taking the honours from Metcalfe A.E.. Life got very confusing for our poor reporter, because there was also a Painter A. and a Painter M., but they race a very quick MG special and are not related to our Editor. In fact Tim Metcalfe won this very competitive class, well done! Peter Whenman had one or two minor problems (maybe not so minor to him!) and so only got one timed run. This kept him out of the frame! A good day all round in a good spot. Come and have a look - or even a go - for youself next year. Results are shown in the following table.

Alastair Barker

Class 1				
No	Driver	1st Run	2nd Run	Handicap
20	J.D. Crabtree	87.18	88.44	86.00
Class 2				
	T C Malada	70.50	75.05	74.00
50	T.G.Wakeley	76.52	75.05	74.00
Class 3				
66	K.P.Painter	74.61	74.59	72.00
67	A.K.Painter	76.31	69.72	72.00
Class winner:	A.K.Painter			
Class 4				
88	N.D.Hall	77.65	76.47	75.00
89	J.F.Harris	82.72	84.80	80.00
90	P.Tebbett	85.26	84.56	80.00
94	A.W.Barker	75.69	75.20	74.00
Class 6				
	A.E.Metcalfe	75.00	74.05	75.00
122		75.90	74.25	75.00
123	T'.M.Metcalfe	71.54	70.82	72.00
126	P.Whenman	73.33	71.00	
Class winner:	T.M.Metcalfe			

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Lagonda and the International Trophy

AT an antique fair the other day, I came across and bought a copy of "Bicycling News" for 12th October 1904, which lengthy report International Trophy race of that year, in which Lagonda was one of the three makes representing Great Britain. The account of this race in the Lagonda history book (pages 30-32) was taken from "The Motor Cycle" and it is interesting to have another, perhaps more detailed, view of the events of that infamous day. As not every member has a copy of the history book, I think it worthwhile to condense both reports into a single account, which can be fuller than there is room for in a book covering seventy-odd years of history.

When the 1903 Paris-Madrid race was stopped, following the dreadful slaughter of the first stage, the infant motor-cycle racing fraternity, although in no way responsible for the deaths, found itself equally under a cloud and equally without any events to promote. Just as the car people had to, they had to seek another, politically acceptable, format for their sport. After months of argument, a formula was proposed that an International trophy race would be held over a closed circuit in France, to be competed for by national teams of three riders. Each rider would have to wear national colours: France blue, Germany white and so on.

As a result of Britain's oppressive legislation there were only a handful of British riders with any experience of road racing, for all British sport was confined to tracks of roughly 1/4 mile circumference, which did not permit much in the way of speed. By contrast, the French, in particular, had a wealth of experienced riders, so many in fact that they had to hold a series of elimination trials to pick their team of three. The

final one of these trials being held on the actual circuit which was to be used for the race, a triangle of roads based on Dourdan - St Arnault, between Paris and Chartres and having a lap length of 54 km (33 1/2 miles).

The British team, chosen perhaps rather hurriedly by the Autocycle Club (predecessor of the ACU) comprised Tom Silver on a Quadrant, J. Hodgkinson on a JAP and Harry Rignold on a Lagonda. Tom Silver was a long-distance trials expert, was the current holder of the Lands End-John O'Groats record and had just returned from a 6000-mile ride across South Africa. His machine reflected this sort of experience and was very much directed towards comfort over long periods, with a virtually standard 79 x 80mm (392 cc) single cylinder engine, geared at 3 1/8 to 1 and lightened only by substituting a smaller one gallon tank and lighter metal pedals. The only effort at tuning was to substitute Brown and Barlow carburettor.

The other two machines were clearly meant to be racers, with dropped handlebars, liberally drilled for lightness and with all unnecessary bits removed, including the mudguards. The JAP was a very recent introduction and had overhead valves, both positively operated, whereas the others had traditional automatic inlet valves and wore their valves at the side. Overhead were regarded with much suspicion at the time and with some reason; valves had a habit of breaking and while a broken side valve usually merely meant that the engine stopped, a broken overhead valve could destroy the piston at the very least.

The Lagonda was the machine that Harry Rignold had been using for track racing. It was visibly much higher geared

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East Kent: First Sunday, Griffin's Head, Chillenden, Nr Canterbury, from noon. Details, John Anderson, Tel 01304 613091.

Dorset: First Thursday, The Ship Inn, Wool. 15 miles E. of Dorchester, MR842868. Details Dudley Palmer Tel 01305 788458, or Peter Dobson, Tel 01202 731265.

Somerset: First Tuesday, The Strode Arms, West Cranmore, 3 miles E of Shepton Mallett. MR 668432 (VSCC Meeting)

Third Thursday, The Rose and Crown, East Lambrook, 5 miles E of Ilminster. MR 423190.

East Anglia: First Friday, Royal Oak, Barrington, Cambs. Details John Stoneman, Tel 01353 649494.

Second Wednesday, The Scole Inn, Scole, near Diss (VSCC Meeting).

Third Wednesday, The Bridge Hotel, Clayhythe, Waterbeach Cambs. Details, John Stoneman 01353 649494.

First Thursday, The White Horse, Edwardstone, MR95 2428. Details James Holland 01787 228241 or Charles Ping 01787 310559. Pub Tel 01787 211211 (Grid ref: 952428).

North East: First Wednesday, The Triton, Brantingham, near the A63T.

Midlands: October - April, last Sunday lunchtime, The Green Dragon, Willington.

West Midlands: Third Saturday of alternate months starting April 95, Talbot Inn, Chaddesley Corbett. Details, T. P. Brewster.

South Wales: First Thursday, Court Colman Hotel, Pen-y-Fai, Near Bridgend (VSCC meeting)

than Lagonda's normal bikes, as the rear belt-pulley was only half the diameter of the rear wheel, compared with the normal one, which nearly filled it. At the time of the race, no details were published of the Lagonda, but later in the vear Rignold bought it to a Blackpool race meeting, where "The Motor Cycle" got a good look at it. The nominal 4 1/2 HP engine had been bored out to 89 x 96mm (597 cc) and fitted with a special spray carburettor of Lagonda's own make. The cooling fins had been turned off the bottom half of the cylinder barrel and it was geared at 2 3/4 to 1. It used 26 x 2 Constrictor tyres and I am fairly sure these were tubulars, as used in cycle racing to this day. Constrictor were a London firm and their tyres employed a patented special construction whereby, as the name suggests, the harder you blew them up, the tighter they gripped the rim. Their other great feature was that the carcass cords were parallel but not bonded together over the circumference, so that they could be pushed aside to reach the inner tube. I haven't the space here to explain fully how this worked, but it was a very useful asset in the days of frequent punctures. Harry Rignold's experience was wholly on the track and this would be his first go at flat-out road racing, but his combative nature would help. Incidentally, I believe him to be the originator of the run-andstart. which was bump disapproved of at the time. It was thought that God provided pedals for you to start with.

The rules of the International Trophy demanded that all machines had to weigh less than 50 kg (110.25 lb.). The British machines certainly did:- Quadrant 109 lb., JAP 109 1/2 lb. and Lagonda 109 lb. There was some doubt about some of the others, as we shall see.

The race distance was to be 5 laps, making 270 km in all (168 miles) and eleven starters faced the gun on Sunday September 24th 1904. There were teams of three from France and the UK, two Germans, two Austrians and a Dane. The

French team, Lamberjack, Inghibert and Demester were all on Griffon machines, this make having demolished all the others in the eliminating trials. The Austrians were both on Laurin & Klement bikes painted black and Mraz of Germany was on a white Progress, but the machine of Folksdorf, the other German seems to have been overlooked. Petersen, the Danish rider, was on a Danish Humber.

The first hint of the legal battles to the from varving came come interpretation of the rules, in particular the one that said: "Competitors are forbidden to replenish at the controls, or to obtain help for repairs; the competitor alone must do his own repairs and he must not replenish on neutral ground". Everyone but the French took this to mean that the rider had to do all his own repairs unaided and that all petrol and oil had to be obtained outside the controls. As a consequence, neither the ACC nor the manufacturers provided any help. The French view, however, was that anything goes outside the controls; only within them was any help forbidden. They didn't explain why such a strange rule should have been imposed, but demonstrated their view of it by permitting squads of tyre makers' employees to circle the course draped in spare tyres and the Griffon firm had a horde of mechanics scattered round the course to put right any mishaps to their machines. As "Bicycling News" said, "that circumstance alone might have been quite sufficient to decide the contest in favour of the French, who, it is stated, were evidently determined to win the race, rules or no rules".

But there was more dirty work to come. Tom Silver, on his first lap, got a front wheel puncture. On examining it, he found he had picked up three of the peculiar French hobnails which will always land points uppermost. While repairing these punctures he noticed a man with a broom busily sweeping the road behind him, where he had just punctured. He went over to see what was going on, whereupon the broom wielder



H. Rignold with the Lagonda Racer, entered for the International Cup Race.



Rignold ready to leave Ablis.

Both pictures from "Motor Cycle" 26 Sept. 1904

ran away and a cyclist who had been either looking on or supervising, also decamped in a hurry. Silver then cast about and picked up any number of these hobnails, all gleaming and new and then he discovered a packet of them hidden behind a roadside marker stone. Closer examination showed that the hobnails had been liberally strewn through this sharpish bend, but only on the racing line.

This incident served to confirm Silver's suspicions, which had been raised in practice. The system that had been employed was that each national team practised together, with the other teams excluded until it was their turn. The French, as host nation, went first. When it became the British turn, Silver had discovered, too late, a deep coating of loose stones on one of the bends which hadn't been there when the French team were practising. He hit it at speed, came off and smashed his front wheel. That was the end of his practice, but he was able to replace the wheel for the race proper - by which time the loose stones had all disappeared. The race organisers blamed the local authority for the stones, which was denied, of course, by that body, which had known all about the race and agreed to its being held.

Let's get back to the race. Hodgkinson had also crashed after a puncture on his first lap, but Rignold had been luckier, or more skilled, although he had punctured, recovered enough to be lying fifth with a first lap time of 50m 8 sec. The fastest was Petersen, in 40m 31s. Neither Silver nor Hodgkinson completed their first laps and Rignold's fortunes plummeted on the next lap when he had an explosive blowout on his rear tyre when travelling at top speed, lost control and crashed, damaging the machine too much to continue. Mraz and Folksdorf went out on this lap as well and Petersen went out on his third. The other five riders completed the course, but Lamberjack and Vondrick were declared to be outside the time limit, so only Demester, Toman and Inghibert were deemed to be finishers, with Demester declared as the winner. Then the protests started. The non-French contingent insisted that the winning machine be weighed and shock! horror!, it was found to be overweight. Instead of disqualifying him awarding the race to the Austrian runnerup, the organisers, in an amazing fit of generosity, gave Demester a couple of hours to try to get the machine down to the stipulated weight! Despite him having completed the race with an illegal machine. There isn't a lot of weight saving possible on a racing motor-cycle, but the Griffon firm did scrape off all the paint and shorten all the wires and looked likely to remove every other spoke if needed, but they did manage to get the weight down enough. Then the row about assistance blew up and eventually, with tempers getting very short, the organisers took refuge in pique and cancelled the whole thing, declaring the result void. This didn't satisfy Toman, who had risked his neck for nothing, had crashed and remounted and ridden the last lap with no saddle after the saddle pin broke (he wrapped his cap around the stump and sat on that).

The protests and appeals were referred to the international governing body, who, months later, reinstated the results and said Demester had won after all, but by then everyone had gone home muttering. Rather surprisingly, the event was held again the following year, but Wilbur Gunn had no part in it, since he was by then much more interested in Tricars. The dissatisfaction with the event persisted, and when the TT started in 1906 that killed it stone dead.

In contrast to "The Motor Cycle", "Bicycling News" published a full list of starters, lap times and finishing positions. I quote it in full below, for historical interest, but unfortunately there are a number of mistakes in it and only the times of Franz Toman actually add up correctly. None of the others add up to the total given, but whether the lap times or the total is in error we may never

know. I must say, however, that I just don't believe the time of 30m 23 sec given for Inghibert on Lap 5. This represents 66.2 mph average speed, a phenomenally high speed for a 1904 motorbike and unbelievably better that his 42.06 mph of the previous lap. The fastest lap by anyone else was 38m 26 sec by Toman on lap 4 (52.35 mph).

Thanks to the kindness of Jim Bolton, Motorcycle and Black Country

historian and good friend of many Lagonda Club members, we have been loaned a copy of the September 26th 1904 "Motor Cycle" in order to reproduce the (very poor quality) photographs of this event. Jim also found the picture of Rignold demonstrating his run-and-bump starting technique, taken at the Blackpool Speed Trials on 14th October 1904.

Arnold Davey

No.	Name	Nationality	Lap Times			Total		
		· ·	Lap 1	Lap 2	Lap 3	Lap 4	Lap 5	
1	Lamberjack	France	1.31.40	0.55.15	0.42.18	0.40.06	0.45.59	4.44.53.2
2	Vondrick	Austria	0.40.55	0.40.25	0.56.05	0.43.13	0.53.23	4.53.41.4
3	Rignold	Gt. Britain	0.50.08	Stopped				
4	Mraz	Germany	0.41.23	Stopped				
5	Petersen	Denmark	0.40.31	1.08.34	Stopped			
6	Inghibert	France	0.57.00	0.51.05	0.59.09	0.47.50	0.30.23	4.15.32.8
7	Toman	Austria	0.58.35	0.54.47	0.45.22	0.38.26	0.43.44	4.00.54.4
8	Hodgkinson	Gt. Britain	Stopped					
9	Folksdorf	Germany	1.22.55	Stopped				
10	Demester	France	0.46.52	0.45.48	0.42.06	0.41.38	0.47.19	3.43.43.4
11	Silver	Gt. Britain	Stopped					



Rignold using his jump-start technique at the Blackpool Speed Trials. Note how Tessier, No 18 is left well behind.

Picture from "Motor Cycle" October 24th 1904

Letters

Dear Ken,

I was very interested to read your comments regarding ladies hobbies. I wonder if we chaps are brave enough to suggest that the ladies should have a whole event devoted to them? Perhaps we could call it "Ladies' Day". We could take a back seat, so to speak, and agree to be organised by them. Some of us already have chauffeurs hats.

I am reluctant to suggest venues or activities, but I fell confident that our ladies could come up with ideas that might be as interesting as fiddling with Lagondas.

Yours,

Anon (Wiltshire)

Dear Ken,

I recently visited Ulster to take part in the excellent Ulster Vintage Trial, the team were Peter Walby, M45; Frank Storrs, LG 45 and myself. The next day, Peter and Anne Walby hosted a luncheon for all members in their area, which was a great success. I enclose some photos - notice Peter's tri car in the corner. Peter's father, Leonard has run CYL 106 since 1950.

Cheers

David Hine

This is also a neat trailer for an article in the next magazine, Leonard still has the letters from Davies Motors Ltd, which led up to the purchase of CYL and these make fascinating reading, so they will be reprinted in the Winter edition.

K.P.P.

Dear Ken,

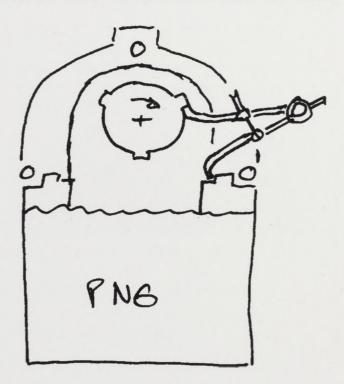
Thank you for the Summer 1995 magazine dedicated to the Le Mans trip. Being only a tearful hanky waver at Sainsbury's, the various accounts have just served to confirm my envious thoughts on that day.

I was not surprised to hear David

Hine's timing skills are inversely proportional to the previous night's revels and offer the following as a possible solution.

One of the reasons we did not venture abroad with the 16/80 this time was the fatwah I received from the Scintilla fairy. This season I am on the 5th PN6, having worked through two of my own, two of Bill Wright's and one of Brian Savill's. This help to stay on the road was vital at the time and is greatly appreciated. By the 3rd coil failure my mag change time was down to about six minutes, including getting out the replacement. This time is based on the complete failure of the mag, ie, no sparks anywhere and thus changing only the mag body: the assumption being that six leads will not fail simultaneously. If the leads are also suspect, the process including them will just take longer.

The trick is always to carry a small pair of inside calipers with the spare magneto and take a reference from the first mag before it is disturbed. This is taken when the HT lead blocks are lifted



clear and records the position of the leading edge of one of the copper sections on the rotor relative to a datum edge. The actual dimension is of no interest, just put the calipers on one side and then adjust the rotor on the second mag to this position, via the Simms coupling, when it is installed. As you are copying the mag timing, not setting it, the engine position is also irrelevant and so it can be tweaked on the starter if the first mag rotor does not immediately offer a measurable position. Experience has shown that the tolerance on the second mag dimension can be as much as 0.025" either way without impact on performance.

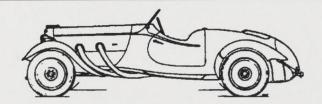
When the immediate panic is over, the plug lead assemblies should be returned to their original mag, as the gap between the rotor and stator pickups is set by shims. This is bypassed when every second counts, applying the alligator and swamp dispensation of 1983 (sub section 2).

I assume that this technique should be adaptable to any magneto/engine combination, although I have just remembered a lecturer who never failed to say that to assume makes an ASS of U and ME.

Regards

John Breen

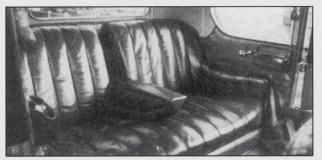




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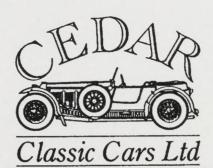
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